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ABSTRACT

Estimates of the annual value of volunteer services in the United States for the period from 1965 to 1974 are presented in this study, with the first goal being to estimate the value of volunteer services for the benchmark year 1974. Its reference points are based upon the results of a national survey of volunteer services sponsored by ACTION (agency for volunteer service) in 1974, and the Department of Labor's 1965 study, "Americans Volunteer." The period from 1965 to 1974 is also analyzed, with alternative assumptions concerning the scope of volunteer services. Secondly, this study analyzes the problem of constructing these estimates, as well as certain methodological and substantive issues raised by the study. Third, it introduces the concept of unorganized volunteer services and explores such issues as their contribution to total volunteer product and the possibility of understatement since this fact was omitted in the Labor and ACTION surveys. Finally, after a discussion of the institutional root of volunteerism, the study concludes with recommendations for further surveys and research. (WL)

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THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES IN THE UNITED STATES

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ACTION
The Agency for Volunteer Service

By
Harold Wolozin
University of Massachusetts
October 15, 1975

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This study was made under contract to ACTION. The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of ACTION. ACTION welcomes this opportunity to publish the findings of research on the subject of volunteer service.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES IN THE UNITED STATES

I Imputations Based on "Americans Volunteer 1974" 3

1. Introduction and Summary of Findings 3
2. The Dollar Value of Volunteer Services 4
3. The Value of Volunteer Services by Demographic Characteristics 4
4. Volunteer Product from 1965 to 1974 5

II Related Issues 7

1. Unorganized Volunteer Services 7
2. Volunteer Services and Volunteerism as Institution 8
3. Economic Decision and Volunteerism 8

III Recommendations 11

IV Appendices 12

Appendix A—Tables

1. The Value of Volunteer Services in the United States 12
2. The Value of Volunteer Services in the United States—Selected Demographic Characteristics 12
3. The Value of Organized Volunteer Services in the United States—Moderate Trend 14
4. The Value of Organized Volunteer Services in the United States—Low Trend 14
5. Types of Volunteer Work 14
6. Value of Organized and Unorganized Volunteer Services—Moderate Trend 14
7. Value of Organized and Unorganized Volunteer Services—Low Trend 14

Appendix B—Survey Methodology

1. Hours of Volunteer Services 15
2. Imputed Hourly Compensation 15
3. The Imputed Value of Volunteer Work 16

I IMPUTATIONS BASED ON "AMERICANS VOLUNTEER 1974"

Introduction and Summary of Findings

This study presents estimates of the annual value of volunteer services in the United States for the period from 1965 to 1974. Its more recent reference point is based upon the results of a national survey of volunteer services sponsored by ACTION and conducted during the week of April 7-13 as part of the Current Population Survey of the Census Bureau in 1974. The principal findings of the ACTION survey and their analyses are presented in the ACTION publication, "Americans Volunteer 1974."

In 1965 the Department of Labor conducted a pioneering study, "Americans Volunteer." This survey provides the earlier reference point. ACTION's survey provides a second and improved benchmark upon which to base new estimates of the value of volunteer services. Although one must be careful not to draw unwarranted conclusions from these estimates, the study provides important new insights into the trend of volunteer services in the United States. Estimates of the important contribution of volunteers to economic welfare and the quality of life in the nation are placed on a firmer statistical base. This is particularly significant in view of current concern and dissatisfaction among social scientists with the traditional economic indicators and social accounts. Many economists and other social scientists have called for more inclusive indicators and measures of the overall welfare and functioning of our economy.[1] Although some economists dispute the need to broaden the scope of the national income accounts, others argue that, as a measure of work as well as value,[2] they *should* be broadened.

The first goal of this study is to estimate the value of volunteer services for the benchmark year 1974. The period from 1965 to 1974 is also analyzed, with alternative assumptions concerning the scope of volunteer services. Second, this study analyzes the problem of constructing these estimates, as well as certain methodological and substantive issues raised by the study. Third, it introduces the concept of unorganized volunteer services and explores such issues as their contribution to total volunteer product and the possibility of understatement since this factor was omitted in the Labor and ACTION surveys. Finally, after a discussion of the institutional roots of volunteerism, the study concludes with recommendations for further surveys and research.

We believe that further work along these lines may produce important insights into the nature and role of volunteerism in the United States and elsewhere. Increasingly, economists, from the pioneering American Institutionalists to the present day, have extended their compass beyond the classical image of the market economy. This broadened scope is also apparent in the Virginia school of economists' interest in the economics of charity. Prof. Kenneth Boulding's work on the grants economy, on the role of ideology in economic behavior, and in the whole development of the theory of public goods is a further indication of increasing awareness of other factors such as the role of volunteerism.

We believe that this study takes on added importance in light of the increasing criticism and debate over what the national accounts of our country, the Gross National Product, actually measure. Many economists, both here and abroad, have questioned whether national accounting systems of nations are adequate measures of the performance of the economy. One of the central criticisms is that certain key elements, encompassing benefits as well as social costs, are excluded.

Particularly relevant to us is the debate over the inclusion of nonmarket as opposed to traditional market activities. Studies of the conventional accounts have already led to important revisions and extensions of the GNP in other parts of the world. This study, together with our similar analysis in 1965, supports such an extension of the U.S. social accounts to include the value of volunteer services. Their magnitude, alone, is ample justification for so doing.

[1] See for example, "Social Indicators and Cyclical Analysis," Udo E. Simonis, in the forthcoming book *Economics in Institutional Perspective*, Lexington Books, Lexington, Mass.

[2] *The Measuring of Work*, W. Wirtz and H. Goldstein, The National Manpower Institute, Washington, D.C. 1975, pp. 43, 47.

The Dollar Value of Volunteer Services

A uniform wage rate ($4.76 in current and $2.80 in 1958 dollars) was applied in all volunteer job classifications. (The method of arriving at these figures is explained in Appendix B.) This brought the total dollar value of volunteer services contributed by Americans to more than $33.9 billion in 1974,[3] contrasted with a value of $7.3 billion in 1965. This uncounted national output reflects the services of unpaid volunteer workers who assist a wide range of voluntary organizations, national, local, governmental, fraternal, etc. Table 1 presents our estimates of the value of volunteer services in the United States for the period 1965 to 1974 in both current and constant dollars.[4] These figures represent our best estimates of the value of the hours of *organized* volunteer services reported by the ACTION survey. We have also adjusted our 1965 estimates to make them comparable to the findings of the 1974 survey findings. In addition to these estimates, we have computed, and added to the total of organized volunteer services the value of informal or *unorganized* volunteer services—a category which was largely excluded from the survey. As Table 1 indicates, the addition of *unorganized* services doubles the values of volunteer services. For example, in 1974 the value of volunteer output is increased to $67.8 billion. Our 1965 study contains a detailed discussion of the rationale for imputing unorganized volunteer services of this magnitude. It is also interesting to note that Columbia University sociologist Robert Nisbet, in a forthcoming book, "Twilight of Authority," attaches great significance to the increasing role of unorganized volunteer service. He says:

> "I refer to the burgeoning of the social impulse among disparate groups in the population: a social impulse manifest in the spreading interest at all levels in voluntary association, ingenious forms of autonomous mutual aid, and what for want of a better term can be called social inventions. . . . The appeal of the nonpolitical, the genuinely social, the voluntary and the cooperative at the grass roots becomes steadily greater. The youth communes, now in their thousands, are certainly, for all their occasional gaminess, reflections of this appeal. But there are many other kinds of voluntary association forming, and the social sciences would do well to uncover and study these." [5]

The importance of volunteer services in the nation's economic life can be understood when they are expressed in terms of the GNP. If the volunteer services contributed through organizations—organized volunteer work—were to be imputed to the GNP, its services component would be increased by more than 6%. Adding "unorganized" services to the total would double the proportion of volunteer "product." Viewed as the creation of national income, these organized services expressed as wages, i.e., income rather than product, would be the equivalent of about 5% of total wages and salaries in the economy in 1974, or more than 4% of total compensation. The latter includes substantial supplements to wages and salaries, such as employer contributions to social insurance, private pension, health and welfare funds, paid vacations, etc.

The Value of Volunteer Services by Demographic Characteristics

Based upon selected data taken from the tapes of the ACTION survey, we have estimated the value of volunteer services according to certain demographic characteristics. Table 2 summarizes these findings for both organized volunteer services and total volunteer services in 1974. The following characteristics are included:

[3] Technically, the value of services measured should correspond to the 12 month period, May 1973—April 1974 covered by the ACTION survey; however, since our estimates project on an annual rate based upon the more reliable data of the survey week in April, we consider it statistically valid to impute our estimates to the calendar year 1974.

[4] A 1958 rather than a 1967 base was used because at the time of this computation the GNP implicit deflator had not yet been converted to a 1967 base.

[5] Quoted in The New York Times, Tuesday, September 23, 1975, "Leviathan Laissez-faire," p. 37

region, family income, marital status, sex, education, employment status, poverty area, age and major occupation.[6] In calculating these estimates, we assumed that the imputed wages, quality of work and productivity did not differ significantly among the various demographic groups.

Estimating the value of volunteer services was a three-pronged challenge. First, we had to derive a dollar estmate for the annual value of volunteer services in 1974. Then we estimated comparable figures for the period from 1965 to 1974. And, finally, we linked these with the earlier Department of Labor estimate of volunteer services in 1965.[7] In essence, the problem was to assign a dollar value to estimates of the number of hours worked, i.e., contributed, by American volunteers in 1974. Then, using appropriate measures, data from the 1965 study could be interpolated with that of the 1974 survey. Our methodology is explained in Appendix B.

Volunteer Product from 1965 to 1974

In measuring the value of volunteer services (volunteer product) for the period from 1965 to 1974, we compare estimates based upon the findings of the 1965 Labor Department survey with its sequel, the 1974 ACTION report, "Americans Volunteer 1974." Table 1 charts the annual trend during this period and raises a fundamental question: Is this a true statement of the trend of volunteer product?

It should be noted immediately that ACTION specifically designed its survey to match the earlier Labor Department survey, in order to ascertain "volunteer trends from 1965 to 1974." However, there are significant differences between the results of the two surveys. Although designed to be comparable to the Labor survey, the ACTION questionnaire was more inclusive than the Labor one on two counts—in its handling of volunteer services contributed under the auspices of religious organizations and in broadening the scope and specificity of the types of organizations listed—and, therefore, produced different results. For example, the ACTION survey gave as examples such activities as political groups and legal services, neither of which was specified in the earlier survey. This may well mark a significant omission or source of understatement in the 1965 report. In addition, omitting "religious groups" in the 1965 enumeration of groups listed as "examples" at the beginning of the questionnaire (although specified in the 1974 survey questionnaire) is another discrepancy. It should be noted, however, that "church" was given as an example of organizations in Item 6 of the 1965 survey questionnaire.

Therefore, we must consider the possibility that the 1965 survey, despite its pioneering nature, significantly understated segments of volunteer services, which were subsequently picked up by the ACTION survey. The Labor survey may have omitted large numbers of volunteers in excluded categories and it may have significantly understated certain categories that were included.

In discussing the rate of increase in individual volunteer services implicit during the period between the two surveys, it is possible that the 1965 survey findings were on the low side. This raises a critical question, for our estimates of the trend of the value of volunteer labor for the years between 1965 and 1974 would be significantly lower if the difference in average manhours of volunteer labor per person in the United States in 1965 were closer to the findings a decade later, or if a larger percentage of the population volunteered in the earlier years. And it would follow that our estimates in Table 1 and 2 are in essence "high trend" estimates with concomitant implications for future years. We must consider this possibility. would follow, then, that recomputing the values over the period would result in low trend series. We have, therefore, recomputed our estimates of volunteer product to reflect the higher estimates of the 1974 survey.

[6] We were unable to obtain urban-rural estimates because of Census Bureau confidentiality rules according to the Department of Commerce. Therefore, such data was not included on the ACTION survey tape. (A June 17, 1974 Bureau of the Census memorandum is the source of this information.)

[7] *Americans Volunteer*, U.S. Department of Labor, Manpower/Automation Research, Monograph No. 10, April 1969, Washington, D.C.

In Table 3, suggesting underestimation of the number of volunteers in the 1965 survey assumes that 10% of the total non-institutional population 14 years and over were volunteers. Table 4 assumes that the number of hours actually worked by the volunteers included in the survey was at the higher level of 1974 for the whole period. This provides two lower trend series of estimates—a "moderate" trend in Table 3 and a "low" trend in Table 4.

In revising the original imputation series (Table 2) which we label the "high" trend, we have, thereby, assumed, first, that the actual hours worked and the actual number of volunteers are greater than the 1965 survey indicated. In reality either or both may have been the case: that the number of volunteers during the survey week in 1965 may have been the same proportion as in 1974 (10%) and that they worked the same number of hours (8.9). Alternatively these values may be considered as setting an upper limit of a range of possible values. In any event, our results are provocative; in 1965 the low trend, for example, more than doubles the estimate of the value of volunteer services. Even the possibility of a difference of this magnitude is a strong argument for further research to resolve the issue. A critical first step would be to include questions on volunteerism in the 1980 Census.

Unorganized Volunteer Services

A second source of understatement may well have resulted in misleading figures not only in the 1965 but in the 1974 estimates of volunteer product as well. Informal or unorganized volunteer work is a class of volunteers which our earlier study considered as important as formal or organized volunteer work[8] and yet this group was omitted in both surveys.

The fact that the 1965 survey was a pioneering effort with no previous experience upon which to build helps to explain why organized volunteer service was understated. However, the omission or understatement of unorganized volunteer services and a resulting understatement of the value of those services cannot be explained on this basis. Rather it seems to reflect a bias in both surveys which can only be resolved by systematic research into the nature of volunteerism. It is entirely possible—in fact, probable—that estimates of the dollar value of volunteer services understate the actual amounts precisely because they are based on "organized" volunteer work and exclude "unorganized" or informal volunteer services. In following the design of the Labor survey ACTION focussed on "types" of organizations and may have inadvertently given the impression to those questioned that it was interested *only* in work done under the formal auspices of *organizations* utilizing volunteers. Thus, it generally excluded informal, unorganized work. Even though the covering letter of the 1974 survey questionnaire stated that ACTION had asked the Bureau of the Census to obtain information about the unpaid volunteer activities of our population, which implies *all* volunteer work, the questionnaire itself was not as general. The survey emphasized work done for an organization. The instructions at the beginning of the survey listed "examples of types of organizations which use the services of unpaid volunteers." And the inclusion of both items 13 and 15 in the CPS questionnaire strengthens this impression by its examples, as did coding instructions to the Census data processors (see Table 5). Thus, by focussing on formal volunteer work done for organizations, the survey may have excluded inadvertently—or at best not encouraged respondents to include—a significant amount of volunteer services not contributed under the auspices of a formal, established organization.

Our findings are supported by various time budget studies.[9] Furthermore, when we look at volunteer activity as an American institution, we find strong support for our conclusion. Volunteerism as a unique institution, comparable to other economic institutions in American society, embodies a long-standing American tradition of helping friends and neighbors. In this sense the scope and nature of volunteer activities encompasses significant areas which were not included in the survey. We shall further explore the nature and implications of viewing volunteerism as an economic institution, as well as the role of the narrowly "economic" motivation which may provide insights into the phenomenon of this non-pay work.

At this point, however, we should indicate the magnitude of volunteer work of an informal or unorganized nature that we think may not have been reported in the ACTION survey. As our earlier studies show, we do not have adequate statistical evidence to provide firm benchmarks for imputing the value of unorganized volunteer services. Statistically reliable quantitative evidence has yet to be uncovered. However, in an earlier study[10] we faced this problem and on the basis of our statistical judgment and fragmentary but persuasive evidence[11] we

[8] Wolozin, Harold, "The Economic Role and Value of Volunteer Work in the United States," unpublished manuscript presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Voluntary Action Scholars, Denver, Colorado, September 1974. pp. 50 ff.

[9] Wolozin, op. cit. pp. 50 ff and 89-90.

[10] Wolozin, op. cit.

[11] Elizabeth Simpson in unpublished budget studies, for example, found that volunteer work in the form of assistance to neighbors and family members not living in the household equalled, at a minimum, time spent in volunteer work for organizations.

assumed then, and assume again, a raising factor of two. Under this assumption "informal" is roughly equal to the size of "formal" volunteer services. Table 1 gives estimates based on the addition of the unorganized volunteer services. These estimates are tentative and preliminary, for until we undertake systematic study and, hopefully, a specialized survey of unorganized or informal volunteer work, they will be subject to the possibility of substantial revision. In fact, some experts think that informal or unorganized volunteer work is considerably larger, rather than just equal to organized volunteer work. If this is true, then our estimates should, perhaps, be considered as the mid-point of a range of estimates incorporating the value of volunteer services. Tables 6 and 7 present the values for the sum of organized and unorganized volunteer services for both moderate and low trend estimates.

Volunteer Services and Volunteerism as Institution

It has become increasingly clear that we need to know much more about volunteerism as an economic institution in our society. Translating into monetary terms the importance of volunteer services to the welfare of American society and to the quality of life raises fundamental questions about the structure and nature of the institution of volunteerism. We refer, in particular, to the distinction between formal and informal volunteer work.

The magnitude of the contribution of volunteerism to the well-being of the nation makes it important to determine its role in our society and whether the volunteer contribution will increase, decrease or remain proportionate to the value of total output of the United States, the Gross National Product. Our research has raised still other questions which show that we must learn much more about the institution of volunteerism. For example, significant differences in the coverage of the 1965 and 1974 surveys, particularly in respect to religious and political volunteer work, raised serious questions concerning the nature of the trend of volunteerism during that decade. Even if the two surveys were completely comparable, would there be sufficient basis for extrapolating the trend of volunteer product on the basis of our present knowledge? At least one economic researcher has raised the possibility of significant changes in the structure of volunteerism over the last decade because of the changing role and status of women in our society. This raises serious questions about the changing structure of volunteerism and its implications for the future, as well as the question of motivation—the nature of the decision to volunteer in our society.

Economic Decision and Volunteerism

Conventional explanations of the motivations for volunteering—providing work without monetary remuneration—generally treat the decision to volunteer as one which will, nevertheless, result ultimately in economic gain. This may take the form of obtaining and reflecting the need for "services that the family cannot produce at home, buy through the market or obtain as a public good," and hence, volunteer output which they must pay for by reciprocal volunteer service. Or it may be more directly selfish—volunteering for on-the-job training of a sort, contacts, etc.[12] Non-economic explanations run in terms of various non-utilitarian, non-material drives[13] ACTION itself attempted to probe basic motivations for volunteering and the results of its survey are summarized on pages 12 and 13 of "Americans Volunteer 1974." We do not intend to evaluate these findings, but rather to put the whole question in another context.

We would like to suggest that there is another, broader approach to volunteerism, one which views it not only as the product of individual decision or motivation, but as a decision which stems largely from the institutional

[12] See Marnie W. Mueller, "Economic Determinants of Female Participation in Volunteer Work" (unpublished manuscript).

[13] For a comprehensive description of research on this subject, see David Horton Smith, "Voluntary Action and Voluntary Groups," Annual Review of Sociology, Volume 1, 1975, p. 247.

nature of volunteerism. Such an institutional approach.[14] would view volunteering not only as an individual decision but one which is fundamentally a collective decision. Study of the past shows that volunteerism is deeply rooted in our society. It is an institution through which a great many individuals volunteer regularly and often spontaneously as members of groups, small and large, ad hoc and formal. Many of these people appear to be motivated by more than purely utilitarian drives. In fact, daily life is filled with examples of such behavior and a regular part of daily existence is largely unrecognized as providing "volunteer services." This is a critical issue in any attempt to study the nature and scope of volunteer services. It is possible that we may gain the kind of insights and knowledge needed to account for "unorganized" volunteer work through study of the institutional nature and structure of volunteerism. We may also understand some of the reasons why it would not be picked up in a survey focused primarily on volunteer work done under the auspices of voluntary organizations. (See "Americans Volunteer 1974," p. 20.)

Although there has been no formal research concerned with the scope and nature of informal or unorganized volunteer work, fragmentary evidence suggests that it is important. A recent national survey by the Survey Research Center, Michigan, for the Filer Commission, for example, reports that "there were some people at almost every income level who reported substantial amounts of time spent helping others." [15] Research into informal or unorganized volunteer services is needed to substantiate Elizabeth Simpson's work which leads her to conclude, on the basis of research on neighborly activities, that volunteers "spent at least as much time in this activity as in volunteer work for organizations." [16]

One problem we face in attempting to research unorganized volunteer work is that available time budget studies have not been designed to isolate volunteer activity and, hence, volunteer product (the value of volunteer services). To cite but one example, the classification of activities in a recent exhaustive study of the use of time in twelve countries made it virtually impossible to isolate either formal or informal volunteer activities.[17]

However, there are many examples of unorganized volunteer services which may be cited from the routine of daily living and which indicate recognized needs and interests. An ad hoc group is formed to block plans to enlarge a highway; the high price of food elicits the spontaneous birth of food coops; parents organize a car pool to transport their children to and from activities; a neighbor helps another neighbor haul his boat; a local group organizes an informal recreation program for the summer, etc. Examples can be gathered which range from projects affecting the whole community to indi-

[14] Institutional economists here and abroad follow this approach, explaining economic behavior in a broad context and studying the institutions in our economy as collective phenomena with unorthodox issues like conflict, coercion and power playing an important role. Economists such as John R. Commons pointed the way to study of collective activity in the early part of the century. Contemporaries such as K. W. Kapp, Gunnar Myrdal, K. Galbraith and other dissenters from the conventional wisdom in economics have emphasized the need to study the institutions in our society as systems with complex motivational stimuli. See my contribution, "Institutional Economics and the Image of Man" in a forthcoming volume, *Economics in Institutional Perspective*, to be published by Lexington Books.

[15] "Results from Two National Surveys of Philanthropic Activity," J. Morgan, R. Dye and J. Hybels, Commission on Private Philanthropy and Public Needs, Washington, D.C. 1975.

[16] Excerpts from letter of Elizabeth Simpson to Harold Wolozin, April 1969.

[17] Alexander & Szalai, et. *The Use of Time*, Mouton, The Hague, Paris, 1972, see Table 1, p. 114 and accompanying text, particularly discussion of leisure and free time on pp. 137-138. The concept of volunteer service is not even mentioned in this encyclopedic study.

vidual, personal services. All of these reflect singular institutional patterns, which are the customs, habits and group patterns of our society. Institutional economists maintain that studying these patterns is central to understanding the nature of economic behavior and, in this case, the nature and sources of unorganized volunteer activity. All of this suggests the need for intensive research into the institutional nature and structure of volunteerism, including the influence of other institutions on volunteerism itself.

ACTION's survey results support these speculations about the relationship between the central institutions of our society and the scope and magnitude of volunteering. Specifically, ACTION's findings on religious volunteer services suggest that the institution of organized religion in our society has a significant influence on the rate of volunteering for "religious-affiliated work," [18] for, in the words of ACTION, "The 1974 volunteers who checked off religion as an activity showed a number of differences which are contrary to the secular volunteer pattern. These differences appeared markedly when income and education are examined." [19] The ACTION survey found, also, that religious-type volunteer work accounted for 50% of the total number of volunteers contributing organized volunteer services during the survey week of April 7 to 13.[20] ACTION also reported an inverse relationship between the rate of volunteering and income, which is "the direct opposite of what has been found in other categories (of volunteer services) where the pattern is the higher the income, the higher the rate of volunteer participation." [21] According to ACTION, "Those volunteers in the below $4,000 a year income level had a volunteer rate of 58%," which held through the $10,000 income level. "Then there was a gradual decline . . . as income rose." The rate fell to 42% among the $20,000 and above a year, a decline of 16%.[22] The findings also raise interesting questions about the relationship between the role of organized religion and education in their institutional influence on volunteerism; for, again in the words of ACTION, "The level of education of volunteers in religious work is the other category that demonstrates the opposite to the conventional volunteer trend. For in the blend of education and religion there was always an inverse ratio to the standard pattern . . . the less education a volunteer has, the higher the percentage rate of volunteer participation . . . those with less than 4 years of high school had a 59% rate of volunteering in the field of religion. Those with 4 years or more of college had 45%." [23]

[18] "Americans Volunteer 1974," p. 1.

[19] Ibid, p. 10.

[20] Ibid, p. 10.

[21] Ibid, p. 10.

[22] Ibid, p. 11.

[23] Ibid, p. 11.

III RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of our analysis of the ACTION Survey of Volunteers and the research underlying our estimates of the value of volunteer labor in the United States, we urge that ACTION:

1. Recommend that the 1980 Census ask questions on
   a. Time spent on volunteer activities—both organized and unorganized
   b. Time spent in helping others than immediate members of the family
   c. Specific types of help extended
   d. Volunteer services received by each family—type and number of hours.
2. Undertake in-depth studies of volunteer activities at the family and community level, as well as case studies of typical projects. This would help to ascertain the kinds and amounts of informal or unorganized, in contrast to organized or organization-sponsored, volunteer work.
3. Explore the feasibility of a monthly or quarterly publication of volunteer service statistics and indicators.
4. Encourage and perhaps, stimulate (by seed money grants) data gathering by national volunteer organizations; data such as amounts of volunteer work (hours) classified by type, and demographic characteristics of their volunteers. This would provide a valuable supplement to other studies of volunteers, in addition to offering needed institutional insights into volunteerism.
5. Last, but not least important, sponsor or institute an annual panel survey of volunteers. This would provide the kind of data which is essential to help understand the motivational and institutional nature of volunteerism. It would also provide more reliable current data to supplement the information we have developed for estimating the value of volunteer services.

IV APPENDICIES

Appendix A—Tables

Table 1—The Value of Volunteer Services in the United States—1965-1974
(millions of dollars)

	Organized		Organized plus unorganized	
	Current $	Constant $ (1958)	Current $	Constant $ (1958=100)
1965	7,336	7,352	14,672	14,703
1966	8,900	8,364	17,800	16,729
1967	10,645	9,552	21,291	19,104
1968	12,874	11,166	25,747	22,332
1969	15,455	12,856	30,910	25,675
1970	18,224	14,436	36,448	28,872
1971	21,487	16,417	42,974	32,834
1972	25,238	18,876	50,476	37,752
1973	28,929	20,556	57,857	41,112
1974	33,910	22,002	67,820	44,004

Source: Computed (see text).

Table 2—Value of Volunteer Services in 1974—Selected Demographic Characteristics

	Organized		Total—organized plus unorganized	
	Current $	Constant $	Current $	Constant $
Region				
Northeast	7,765	5,038	15,530	10,077
Northcentral	10,682	6,931	21,363	13,861
South	9,800	6,359	19,600	12,717
West	5,629	3,652	11,258	7,304
Family income				
$0-3,999	3,051	1,980	6,103	3,960
4,000-9,999	4,204	2,728	8,409	5,456
10,000-14,999	3,662	2,376	7,324	4,752
15,000-19,999	17,498	11,353	34,995	22,706
20,000 and up	5,460	3,542	10,919	7,085
Marital status				
Married	23,330	15,137	46,660	30,274
Never married	7,291	4,730	14,581	9,461
Other marital	3,289	2,134	6,579	4,268

Sex				
Male	14,751	9,570	29,502	19,141
Female	19,159	12,431	38,318	24,862
Education				
Less than 4 years of high school	7,765	5,038	15,530	10,077
4 years of high school	11,325	7,349	22,651	14,697
College, less than 4 years	7,291	4,730	14,581	9,461
College, 4 years or more	7,528	4,884	15,056	9,769
Employment status				
Employed	20,176	13,091	40,353	26,182
Unemployed	1,085	704	2,170	1,408
Not in labor force	12,648	8,206	25,297	16,413
	Organized		Organized plus unorganized	
	Current $	Constant $	Current $	Constant $
Poverty area				
Poverty	5,324	3,454	10,648	6,909
Non-poverty	28,586	18,548	57,172	37,095
Age				
14-17 years	3,527	2,288	7,053	4,576
18-24 years	4,103	2,662	8,206	5,324
25-44 years	14,683	9,527	29,366	19,054
45-54 years	5,765	3,740	11,529	7,480
55-64 years	3,221	2,090	6,443	4,180
65 years and over	2,577	1,672	5,154	3,344
Major occupation				
Professional, technical and kindred	5,256	3,410	10,512	6,821
Managers, administrative (except farm)	2,713	1,760	5,426	3,520
Sales workers	1,255	814	2,509	1,628
Clerical and kindred	3,662	2,376	7,324	4,752
Craftsmen and kindred	1,085	704	2,170	1,408
Operatives (except transport)	1,085	704	2,170	1,408
Transport equipment operatives	305	198	610	3,960
Non-farm laborers	882	572	1,763	1,144
Service workers (except private household)	2,340	1,518	4,680	3,036
Agricultural, private household and never worked	15,293	9,922	30,587	19,846

Source: Estimates based upon hourly data from ACTION tapes for Americans Volunteer 1974. A uniform wage rate ($4.76 in current and $2.80 in 1958 $s) was applied across the board in all classifications.

Table 3—Value of Volunteer Services—Moderate Trend (organized)

	Current $
1965	10,457,574
1966	12,008,256
1967	13,250,717
1968	15,754,648
1969	18,214,472
1970	20,786,896
1971	23,750,719
1972	27,091,750
1973	30,017,988
1974	34,145,384

Table 4—Value of Volunteer Services—Low Trend (organized)

	Thousands of $
1965	16,299,269
1966	17,451,999
1967	18,913,698
1968	20,565,135
1969	22,358,636
1970	24,476,562
1971	26,533,705
1972	28,707,702
1973	30,894,581
1974	33,910,240

Table 5—Types of Volunteer Work (CPS-631 Item 15)

Code	Type of work
10	Fundraiser
	Organizer or planner
21	Member board of directors
29	Other organizer or planner
	Group leader
31	Scouting (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.)
32	Sports (baseball coach, umpire, etc.)
33	Clubs (Lions, VFW officer, etc.)
39	Other group leader
	Giver of direct service
41	Aide, assistant
42	Teacher, tutor
43	Kitchen and food service
44	Groundskeeping, janitorial, maintenance
45	Construction, building, laborer
46	Protective
47	Driver
48	Companion
49	Other service
	Clerical
51	Secretary, typist
52	File clerk
53	Bookkeeper, accountant
59	Other clerical
	Other
61	Usher
62	Choir
63	Pollwatcher, campaign worker
64	Sales
68	Other
69	No specific type of work, e.g., "anything," "nothing in particular," "whatever had to be done," etc.
99	NA or "don't know"

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce Social and Economic Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233

Table 6—Value of Volunteer Services—Moderate Trend (organized plus unorganized)

	Current $
1965	20,915,148
1966	24,016,512
1967	27,306,116
1968	31,509,296
1969	36,428,964
1970	41,573,792
1971	47,501,438
1972	54,183,500
1973	60,035,976
1974	68,308,768*

* Because of rounding differs from actual.

Table 7—Value of Volunteer Services—Low Trend (organized plus unorganized)

	Current $
1965	32,598,538
1966	34,903,998
1967	37,827,396
1968	41,130,270
1969	44,717,272
1970	48,953,124
1971	53,067,410
1972	57,415,404
1973	61,789,162
1974	67,820,480

Appendix B—Survey Methodology

Our methodology was based upon the imputation techniques formulated in an exploratory study [24] utilizing the date of the 1965 Labor Department volunteer survey. The following section describes (1) the imputation technique used to derive the basic estimates presented in Table 1, (2) assumptions underlying the various sets of data and (3) some of the problems encountered in constructing these estimates. The implications of differences between the results of the 1965 and 1974 surveys are also discussed, particularly the finding that volunteers worked significantly longer hours per week in 1974 than in 1965.

Hours of Volunteer Services

The first task in our imputation was to estimate hours of volunteer services contributed annually countrywide, i.e., annual manhours of volunteer work for the period from 1965 to 1974. The basic data on volunteer labor consisted of the number of volunteers, and the average hours worked by those volunteers during the survey week in 1965 and 1974. Computations were based upon the survey data for the week rather than the year because we judged it much more statistically reliable, that is, the recall error would be lower. The figures for the years in between were interpolated and the results multiplied for each year to obtain hours per week worked by the volunteers. This weekly total was then multiplied by 52 to obtain volunteer manhours per year. In order to make the two benchmark years comparable we added the hours of 6.7 million volunteers reported in 1965 as contributing "non-religious" work, together with the work of 2.7 million volunteers described in the 1975 survey as working for "religious" groups. When the resulting totals of volunteer manhours per year are divided by the total non-institutional population 14 years of age and over, the results show an increase from an annual average of 20.41 hours per person in 1965 to 45.34 in 1974, and an increase in per person volunteer services of almost 25% per year, on average. In addition to being interesting in itself, this annual average enables us to estimate an alternative volunteer manhour series. It suggests either that there has been a secular increase in the trend of volunteer services during that decade or that the 1965 estimate is on the low side. We shall explore the implications of the latter.

Imputed Hourly Compensation

The next, and key, statistic to estimate was the market value of an average hour of volunteer work for each year. Once we had obtained that key figure we could multiply it by the comparable number of hours worked to obtain the current imputed dollar value of organized volunteer services for 1974 and then for the period from 1965 to 1974. It was important to obtain an estimate of total hourly compensation rather than total wages and salary, for non-wage fringe benefits have become a significant part of the income of the labor force in the American economy. Thus, wages and salaries plus these fringes represent the true cost of and payment for services. The hourly compensation figure we derived, which we believe represents the closest occupational match, is an average of mean hourly compensation for employees in (1) wholesale and retail trade, (2) finance, insurance and real estate and (3) services. To calculate this, estimates of average annual compensation for fulltime employees in the three groups (wages and salaries plus other fringe benefits including vacation pay) were obtained from the Department of Commerce and then divided by Department of Labor estimates of average annual hours worked in these corresponding occupational groupings. This gave us an imputed hourly compensation for each occupational grouping. The results were then averaged to obtain the imputed hourly compensation of volunteer services—what they would be worth in the marketplace rather than as an "opportunity cost." [25]

[24] Wolozin, op. cit.

[25] In the earlier study of volunteer services cited above, it was concluded, on the basis of matching volunteers by age, sex and educational attainment with Victor Fuch's calculation of 1959 average hourly earnings of non-agriculture employed persons (based upon the 1/1000 sample of the U.S. Census of Population and Housing) that the same imputation level would have resulted if we had attempted to estimate an opportunity cost valuation. Wolozin, op. cit., p. 86.

Ideally, we would have liked to obtain ... the actual work contributed by volunteers, classified by type and level of skill, to see if the "mix" of types and levels of work and skill was the same in both the voluntary and the paid sectors. The information available in the survey tapes, however, classified volunteer work by four broad categories: fundraiser, organizer or planner, group leader and giver of direct services. These categories could not be matched to detailed labor force data without incurring the risk of error. For example, the latter category, probably the largest, could have ranged from the contributions of highly skilled medical practitioners or counselors to the services of dishwashers or sick room attendants. One might expect such information to be available for national volunteer organizations. Unfortunately, it is not. Statistical data gathered by national voluntary organizations could serve as a basis for obtaining occupational and skill level mixes of volunteers. Unfortunately, with only a very few exceptions, such as the Veterans Administration, the volunteer organizations do not record the type of work contributed by their volunteers. Most national volunteer organizations do not even have reliable records on the work of their volunteers. The American Red Cross, for example, was no longer able to give us figures on hours contributed by their volunteer workers, a statistic which they supplied in our earlier study of the value of volunteer labor. One recent exception is a study by United Way of America, reporting that in 1973 their member agencies contributed 2.4 billion volunteer manhours per year.[26]

The Imputed Value of Volunteer Work

The hourly compensation estimates were then multiplied by the comparable estimates of hourly compensation to give us our first and basic estimates of the current dollar value of volunteer work for the period from 1965 to 1974. The next step was to express these estimates in constant dollars. These were converted to a 1958 rather than a 1967 base because the two key indexes used in the computation, the implicit price deflator for Gross National Product and Denison's index of quality as determined by the amount of education, were expressed on a base of 1958. To derive the constant dollar values, three steps were involved: (1) our estimates of annual manhours of volunteer work were multiplied by constant dollar estimates of imputed hourly compensation (1958=100), (2) the product was then multiplied by Denison's index of quality as affected by the amount of education and (3) finally, that product was divided by 100 to obtain constant dollar estimates of the value of volunteer services (Table 1).

[26] "A Study of the Quantity of Volunteer Activity of United Way and Its Member Agencies," United Way of America, 1974. Prepared for the Commission on Private Philanthropy and Public Needs.

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GPO 909-188